



NATIONAL
SAFETY
MONTH 07

Indoor Air Quality

Clean the air and live safely.

There are unseen risks in the home and community that claim innocent lives each year – carbon monoxide (CO), radon and lead. More than 300 people per year die of CO poisoning, while radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer. Lead exposure is so dangerous, especially to children, that many communities require lead testing for all school-age children.

While these dangers can exist in any home, simple precautions can greatly reduce their presence, and the number of injuries and deaths each year.

Air Quality Risks

- **Carbon Monoxide (CO)** – an odorless, colorless gas that can be emitted by unvented space heaters, furnaces, wood and gas stoves, fireplaces, water heaters, automobile exhaust, and tobacco smoke.
- **Radon** – a gas formed by the natural radioactive decay of uranium in rock, soil, and water. It can enter homes through cracks in floors or walls, openings around sump pumps, drains, crawl spaces, etc.
- **Lead** – most exposure comes from lead-based paint used in homes built before 1978, in the form of lead-contaminated dust. Bare soil often contains lead deposited by vehicle emissions from leaded gasoline or lead-based paint.

Tips for Prevention

- Install CO detectors in your home, especially near bedrooms.
- Have furnaces, chimneys and flues inspected and cleaned every year.
- Never burn charcoal inside an enclosed space.
- Never use your oven or gas range to heat your home.
- Never leave a car or lawn mower engine running in a shed or garage.
- The EPA estimates that one in 15 U.S. homes has an elevated level of radon, but the only way to know if your home has a problem is to test it. For more information, or to order a low-cost test kit, call the National Radon Hotline at 800.767.7236.
- If you suspect you have a lead problem, hire a risk assessor or sampling technician.
- Cover bare soil with mulch, pebbles, shrubs, or grass.
- Eat foods rich in iron, calcium, or zinc to reduce the amount of lead retained in the body.

Celebrating
Safe Communities